



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Medical Assistance Services

600 EAST BROAD STREET,

SUITE 1300

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219

April 7, 2005

Dear Prescriber,

It is our pleasure to introduce you to a new quality improvement initiative the Virginia Medicaid Program will be implementing in the next few weeks. The Behavioral Pharmacy Management System (BPMS), a product owned by Comprehensive NeuroScience, Inc., (CNS), has been implemented in a number of State Medicaid programs across the country to improve the quality of their behavioral health pharmacy programs. With the full support of the Psychiatric Society of Virginia, we are implementing the BPMS program here in Virginia. The details of the program design and intervention are described in the attached document.

Our goals are to evaluate the clinical quality of care being provided to Medicaid consumers in Virginia, and intervene where prescribing patterns both deviate from the expert consensus on best practice, and are high cost. Our preliminary analysis indicates the BPMS program will enable us to address the following areas of concern:

1. Patients receiving the same medication from more than one prescriber
2. Interrupted treatment due to not refilling medication on time
3. Patients receiving several medications of the same type

By using BPMS, we will receive a detailed, trend-based picture of behavioral prescribing practices and corresponding patient utilization in Virginia's Medicaid Fee-For-Service program. We believe that by focusing on improving the quality of behavioral health prescribing practices, we will also develop a more cost effective program.

We know that doctors in Virginia take pride in providing high quality care to their patients and this program is designed to support your efforts. The BPMS uses readily available Medicaid pharmacy claims data and this program does not require any special information or action from prescribers at this time. Data analysis will be ongoing, and specific conditions will trigger information to be sent to physicians on a regular monthly basis.

We welcome any feedback or questions you have about our implementation of this program. We would especially appreciate any recommendations you have regarding other areas of psychiatric pharmacy practice where you see room for quality improvement or increased cost effectiveness. Prescribers may contact us at bpms@dmass.virginia.gov or by calling 804-225-2873. Please note this email address and telephone number are specific for this program.

Sincerely,

Patrick W Finnerty, Director
Department of Medical Assistance Services

James Reinhard, M.D., Commissioner
Department of Mental Health,
Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse
Services

Enclosure

A Clinical Alternative to Behavioral Pharmacy Management

Comprehensive NeuroScience, Inc. (CNS) provides a behavioral pharmacy service that reviews prescribing practices in State Medicaid fee-for-service programs and Medicaid health plans. The CNS service is based on readily available Medicaid pharmacy claims and does not require the special collection of information from prescribers. The analysis is the basis for a CNS prescriber education and outlier management system, called the Behavioral Pharmacy Management System (BPMS). The BPMS focuses on improving the quality of behavioral health pharmacy prescribing practice and, as a result, can reduce the costs of pharmacy expenditures. It is accepted by both mental health clinicians and patient advocates because of its focus on quality improvement.

CNS EXPERIENCE IN MEDICAID

CNS has implemented the BPMS program in complex public sector settings including Health Plans responsible for Medicaid-eligible individuals. Currently CNS is working with multiple state Medicaid and mental health agencies to implement the service. CNS's first state contract was with the state of Missouri – a joint initiative of the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Division of Medical Services (DMS-Medicaid). The Missouri program involves behavioral pharmacy services for all Medicaid-eligible individuals in the State's fee-for-service program.

THE BPMS PROGRAM

The BPMS analysis focuses on specific areas called "quality indicators" to compare prescriber practice with best-practice prescribing guidelines. Examples of these indicators include:

- Prescribing two or more antipsychotic medications to a patient concurrently;
- Excess dosing, as well as prescribed dosages below recognized therapeutic levels;
- Children who are prescribed three or more behavioral health drugs concurrently;
- Patients who receive antipsychotic prescriptions from multiple prescribers concurrently;
- Failure of high risk patients to fill behavioral health antipsychotic prescriptions in a timely fashion.

The educational letters are sent out monthly to prescribers under letterhead that is customized to the state or health plans preference. In Missouri, for example, the Medical Director of DMH, tailors and signs all educational letters. Physician Peer Reviewers are selected from the State or region in which the program is conducted to consult with prescribers who continue to deviate from best practice guidelines over a period of months.

The CNS BPMS offers an attractive option for the management and quality control of Medicaid behavioral health prescribing practices. Because it focuses on quality improvement, it is generally strongly supported by clinicians and advocates.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Comprehensive NeuroScience, Inc. promotes best clinical practices in the use of behavioral health pharmaceuticals in public sector settings with a special focus on Medicaid.

CNS was incorporated in March 1999, primarily to conduct clinical trials for new drugs introduced to treat central nervous system and related disorders. In addition, the company has become the national leader for the development of expert, consensus-based clinical practice guidelines and related educational publications (The Expert Consensus Guideline Series). These guidelines are now used as a "best practice" standard in the treatment of children and adults with mental illnesses or emotional disorders. You can learn more about us on our website by visiting www.cnswebsite.com or contact us at <http://www.statebpms.net/bpmva>.



Comprehensive NeuroScience, Inc.

Pennington, NJ